

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Office Action mailed March 16, 2005, claims 1-38 stand rejected. Claims 1, 16-21 and 30-31 have been amended. Applicants have thoroughly reviewed the outstanding Office Action including the Examiner's remarks. The following remarks are believed to be fully responsive to the Office Action. The Applicants thank the Examiner for meeting in person with Applicants' representatives. All the pending claims at issue are believed to be patentable having been amended to define over the applied references in a manner consistent with the agreement reached between the Examiner and Applicants' representatives.

CLAIM REJECTIONS – 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Office Action states that claims 1, 2, 4, 10-12, 15-17, 19 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by *Hein* (U.S. Patent No. 6,441,510). The Examiner states that *Hein* discloses an automotive device for displaying vehicle parameters and a method for installing additional instrumentation in a vehicle as claimed.

Hein is directed to a reconfigurable modular instrument cluster arrangement. Shown in FIG. 1 of *Hein* is an instrument panel 10, which includes a wiring and electronics system provided by a generic instrument gauge/display cluster subcomponent 12 arranged to receive one or more separate modular gauges 14, a flat flexible cable (FFC) 16 that is generic for all potential configurations of the instrument panel and electronic components, a smart junction box 18, and a set of electronic modules. (*See Hein*, col. 3, 19-27). Each module connects to FFC 16 using an appropriately configured quick-connect type connector 30. (*See id.* col. 3, 29-30). Each connector 30 is selectively configured to allow a particular module to be connected to appropriate wires provided by FFC 16 depending on the type and features of a selected module.

(*See id.* col. 3, 33-36). In accordance with the invention of *Hein*, FFC 16 is arranged to be uniform to all potential configurations of the instrument panel and electronic components. (*See id.* col. 3, 36-38). According to *Hein*, an ITS Data Bus (IDB) link 60 is used for electronic components typically offered in the highest option vehicles. (*See id.* col. 4, lines 46-48). The FFC connects common signals between all the devices. (*See id.* col. 62-63). Accordingly, the FCC provides a connection between the data bus 60 and connector 30.

In a meeting held with Applicants' representatives on May 31, 2005, the Examiner agreed with Applicants' representatives that *Hein* did not disclose a connector for releasably and directly connecting to a vehicle data bus. (*See* Examiner's Interview Summary of May 31, 2005.) Instead, *Hein* discloses, as noted above, the connector 30 being connected to the data bus link 60 through at least the presence of FCC 16. In accordance with the agreement reached, the Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite an automotive device for displaying vehicle parameters that are transmitted via a vehicle data bus comprising, among other features, "a connector for releasably and directly connecting to a vehicle data bus." Support for the claim amendment is provided in the application as originally filed, for example, at page 4-5, paragraph 19, and page 6, paragraph 21 and FIG. 4. Independent claims 16 and 21 have been similarly amended. As noted by the Examiner in the Interview Summary, such an amendment in connection with the recited connector "overcomes the prior art." Accordingly, claims 1, 16 and 21 are believed to be patentable. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

Because claims 2, 4, 10-12, 15 depend from directly or indirectly from claim 1 and claims 17, 19 and 20 depend directly or indirectly from claim 16, claims 2, 4, 10-12, 15, 17, 19 and 20 are also believed to be patentable. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

CLAIM REJECTIONS - 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Office Action states that claims 3, 7, 18, 21-24, 28-30, 32, 33 and 36-38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Hein* in view of *Kuhn* (U.S. Patent No. 6,614,385). In addition, the Office Action further states that claims 5, 25 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Hein* in view of *Bekert* (US 6,175,789). Claims 6, 8, 9 and 27 are rejected under Section 103(a) as purported being unpatentable over *Hein* in view of *Kubota* (U.S. 6,401,029), and claims 13, 14, 34 and 35 are rejected under Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Hein* in view of *Decker* (US 6,601,442). Finally, claim 31 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Hein* in view of *Hayashi* (US 6,781,512).

In order to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, the prior art references must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. *See MPEP § 2143.* As noted above, independent claims 1, 16 and 21 have been amended to recited “a connector for releasably and directly connecting to a vehicle data bus,” which, the Examiner concedes is not disclosed by *Hein*. It is believed that none of the references: *Kuhn*, *Bekert*, *Kubota*, *Decker*, or *Hayashi*, as applied, cure the deficiency of *Hein*. Because *Hein*, alone or in combination with the reference cited by the Examiner, fails to teach or suggest the connector as now claimed in claims 1, 16 and 21, *Hein* fails to teach the invention as a whole. Accordingly, a *prima facie* case of obviousness cannot stand with regard to claims 1, 16 and 21. Claims 3, 5-9, 13 and 14 depend directly or indirectly from claim 1, claim 18 depends indirectly from claim 16, and claims 22-38 depend directly or indirectly from claim 21. Thus, claims 3, 5-9, 13, 14, 18, and 22-38 patentably define over the cited references. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections.

Docket No. 87355-9680
Application No. 10/700,151
Customer No. 30734

Patent

ADDITIONAL AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 16-20 have been further amended to define the invention. These amendments are fully supported by the application as filed, for example, at page 6, paragraphs 21 and 22 and claim 20 as originally filed.

ATTORNEY DOCKET NUMBER

Applicants have amended the Attorney Docket Number to now read as "87355-9680." Applicants request that this number be used when referencing the "Attorney Docket No." in connection with this application.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and such action hereby solicited. If it is believed that the application is not in condition for allowance the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney if it is believed that such contact will expedite the prosecution of the application.

No extensions of time are believed due in connection with this submission. However any extension of time necessary for entering this paper is hereby requested and any fees due for consideration of this response is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2036.

Respectfully submitted,

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